

## GOAL TWO

*Coordinate the efficient and effective use of technology systems to enhance educational opportunities on a statewide basis.*

### STRATEGIES

- Connect every school district to ND STAGEnet.
- Implement a statewide “web meeting” application to facilitate K-12 needs for a widespread communication involving dozens of end-points.
- Implement K-12 educational projects in cooperation with the North Dakota University System (NDUS), using Internet2 capabilities such as virtual field trips.
- Expand the implementation of PowerSchool to every school district that wants to use it as a student information system.
- Develop and implement a plan for the North Dakota Division of Independent Study to be completely self-supporting by 2010.
- Ongoing strategies.

Cost-effective, affordable solutions are necessary if every student in North Dakota is to receive the educational opportunities required to prepare them for the 21st century. Technology, coordinated on a statewide basis, plays an important role in providing these opportunities.

This coordination includes the implementation of STAGEnet, a statewide broadband network, one of the state’s most notable achievements. STAGEnet makes possible educational programs such as interactive video classes, web-based research by students, and the development and delivery of course materials by teachers in all subject areas. STAGEnet makes distance-learning opportunities available so that geographical location is no longer a barrier. Currently, STAGEnet provides high-speed broadband connections to every public high school district in North Dakota, plus 25 K-8 districts. The remaining 16 K-8 and rural districts will be evaluated in 2003 and connected to STAGEnet when it is practical and cost-effective.

STAGEnet will be the vehicle for implementing web-based meetings as a cost-effective solution for connecting people throughout the state. Web meeting technologies make it possible to communicate effectively with dozens of end-points on an ad-hoc basis, something not practical using standard videoconferencing technologies. Meetings and in-service sessions of EduTech, the North Dakota Association of Technology Leaders and the Department of Public Instruction are potential initial users.

The implementation of educational projects such as Internet2 provide potential for K-12 teachers and students to participate in new educational experiences that require higher capacity than the traditional Internet. Examples include access to specialized research equipment and worldwide multipoint videoconferencing. Participation in Internet2 by North Dakota K-12 schools requires the cooperative efforts of the North Dakota Education Telecommunication Council (ETC), the North Dakota Information Technology Department (ITD), the North Dakota University System (NDUS), and EduTech.

PowerSchool is another promising program that provides a cost-effective, reliable, state-of-the art student information system to help schools manage student information, collect data and report information to state and federal agencies. PowerSchool allows teachers and administrators to manage student records online with ease, with automated tasks including attendance, grades and class scheduling. It is operated on a centralized basis by ITD with access through the state network. By October of 2003, up to 30 school districts will be using PowerSchool as their student information system. Based on initial success, it is expected that an additional 50 schools may implement PowerSchool.

The North Dakota Division of Independent Study (NDIS) will continue to play a critical role in delivering distance education to students in North Dakota and throughout the United States. The director and staff of NDIS in consultation with the director of the ETC, will develop a plan to make NDIS self-supporting by 2010. This will eliminate the need for the general fund appropriation that NDIS now relies on to cover about 17 percent of its total budget.

The ETC will continue to improve its organizational structure and operation as a governance board, and continue to fund the director's position to fulfill the mission of the ETC in coordinating educational technology programs. ETC's ongoing coordination efforts will include leading the state's E-rate application filing and state educational technology planning processes. The newly reorganized EduTech will continue to provide schools with cost effective information technology services such as e-mail, web hosting and a help desk. It will also coordinate state buys of educational software and support statewide applications such as BlackBoard for enhancing face-to-face instruction and video delivered instruction, and as a stand-alone delivery method for completely web-based courses.



***"ITD deployed a system called PowerSchool, where teachers can track attendance and keep virtual grade books. Parents can even check their children's schoolwork ... from the privacy of their homes."***